



About Gloria Molina BIOGRAPHY



On February 19, 1991, Gloria Molina became the first Latina ever elected to the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. To many observers both at home and across the nation, Molina's election to the board represented both the growing formidability of the Latino electorate and the determination of voters of all backgrounds to elect a leader to office who understood their needs.

A proud daughter of a Mexican mother and a Mexican-American father, Molina grew up in working-class surroundings and she is acutely aware that as L.A. County property values skyrocket, fewer people can afford to buy homes. She understands that for many people—but particularly children—public parks take the place of private backyards. Consequently, Molina has prioritized the development of new parks. She has been an influential force behind Los Angeles River revitalization projects, which include the Los Angeles River Center, the Los Angeles Bikeway Plan, and numerous pocket parks from Marsh Street Park in Elysian Valley to Clara Street Park in Cudahy. She also has helped bring to fruition greening projects along the L.A. River from

Bell and Cudahy to Maywood and South Gate. Molina has been instrumental developing the “Emerald Necklace,” a network of rivers and green space gracing the San Gabriel Valley which includes Lashbrook Park in El Monte, the Thienes Gateway in South El Monte, the San Jose Creek Vista in Avocado Heights, El Bosque del Rio Hondo, and the much anticipated San Gabriel River Discovery Center. Molina has allocated tens of millions of dollars toward various parks capital projects which include (but are not limited to) the construction of a gym in City Terrace, a senior center at Roosevelt Park, improvements for the Bassett Little League in Shyre Park, the construction of both the Santa Fe Dam Nature Center and additional lifeguard facilities, as well as multiple renovations at Whittier Narrows Regional Park. Assorted upgrades at other county parks also have taken place under Molina's leadership. These include a new skate park and synthetic soccer field at Bassett Park, a new computer center at Saybrook Park, a new splash pad and Tiny Tots Adventure Zone at Mayberry Park, a new skate park at Belvedere Park, a new splash pad and kitchen at Valleydale Park, and a completely remodeled Salazar Park.

Molina grew up in the Pico Rivera area and is the eldest of ten children. She understands that children of working families rely on public libraries to function as *de facto* after school programs. As a result, Molina has fought tirelessly to protect county public library services any time the county's fiscal health was threatened and she prevented 16 county libraries from closing in 2003. She proceeded over the grand opening of the long-awaited East Los Angeles Civic Center, which includes a new childcare center, state-of-the-art library (including a children's amphitheater and a Chicano Resource Center), a refurbished lake and park, a pedestrian promenade, a new transit plaza, and a new “county hall.” Recently, remodeling efforts have been completed at the Anthony Quinn Library in East L.A. and the Graham Library in the unincorporated Florence-Firestone neighborhood. Plans also are being drafted to remodel the Bell Gardens Library and rebuilding of the Sorensen Library in South Whittier already is underway. A completely remodeled Huntington Park Library opened to the public in Summer 2006. In addition, Molina is overseeing a county library refurbishment campaign for 12

facilities within the First District, including the Leland R. Weaver Library in South Gate, the Walnut Library, the Montebello Library, the Rivera Library in Pico Rivera, El Camino Real Library in East L.A., the City Terrace Library in East L.A., the La Puente Library, the Sunkist Library in La Puente, the Norwood Library in El Monte, El Monte Library, and the Rosemead Library.

Throughout her youth, Molina witnessed her father arrive home each day exhausted from his job as a laborer. So when she became an elected official, Molina understood that the public treasury originates from working people's hard-earned paychecks. Accordingly, Molina has advocated for fiscal responsibility and "good government" values. She ended the county practice of pension spiking, saving taxpayers nearly \$100 million. She effectively reined in medical malpractice liability costs, and she eliminated numerous perks, bonuses, and transportation allowances for highly paid bureaucrats.

Accustomed to hard work since childhood, Molina understood from a young age that many people do not have advantages and that eliminating unfair barriers is the best way to ensure equal opportunity. To this end, Molina is committed to fighting for working families. Molina was a major force behind the construction of Centro Estrella (which is Spanish for "Center of the Stars"), a facility designed primarily to assist children with special needs who reside on the Eastside. She made it possible for 222 youngsters to receive daycare via her Infant Care Expansion Grant. It is thanks to her persistence that Los Angeles Universal Preschool—better known as LAUP—is increasing preschool capacity in areas of greatest need so as to level the early education playing field. It is also a testament to Molina's political abilities that First 5 LA—a quasi-county agency charged with improving the health and education of children from prenatal through five years of age—enacted the Partnership for Families child abuse prevention program in concert with the county's Department of Children and Family Services.

Molina also understands that the public sector must strive wherever possible to augment affordable housing and mitigate homelessness. In the past decade, well over 1,000 new affordable housing units have been constructed in her district, which includes East L.A.—the third most densely-populated area in the nation. Molina insisted that the blueprint for revitalizing Grand Avenue in downtown L.A. include a significant affordable housing component. Moreover, she was a key player behind L.A. County's recent decision to invest \$100 million explicitly to increase affordable housing and assist the homeless population. Of this amount, \$80 million in one-time funds will be used for rental subsidies and to build emergency, transitional, and permanent housing. The remaining \$20 million in ongoing funds will be spent primarily to help get homeless families who live in downtown L.A.'s Skid Row off the streets.

Since her political beginnings during the 1970s Chicano movement as a woman's health advocate, Molina recognized that just because you hold a job does not mean you have health care access, and that the mere cost of medicine prevents many people from being healthy. Molina realized that working adults are not the only ones who suffer from this injustice. Children suffer, too. Consequently, Molina started the "Nurse Mentoring Program" in partnership with local community colleges to help alleviate L.A. County's nursing shortage and to provide an opportunity for hundreds of individuals to become skilled employees. She worked with the private sector so that hundreds of schoolchildren could receive eyeglasses that they otherwise could not afford through the "Gift of Sight" project. She was instrumental in acquiring a \$1 billion federal commitment from President Bill Clinton in 1995 to rescue L.A. County's public health care system, upon which millions of people depend. It is thanks to Molina that all public health clinics in the First District that L.A. County was forced to close in 2001 due to budget cuts were eventually reopened. Molina also fought hard to ensure that the LAC+USC Medical Center replacement project moved forward. The completed, state-of-the-art facility should open to the public in November 2007.

Molina spent many of her days as a young adult providing job training for at-risk youth in the unincorporated areas of East Los Angeles so she understands the government's obligation to provide a safe, healthy environment in which to raise a family. As supervisor of the district with the largest population living in unincorporated areas, Molina has made quality-of-life issues a central point of her agenda. She aggressively closed down massage parlors acting as fronts for prostitution, cracked down on illegal pharmacies selling dangerous over-the-counter drugs without a prescription, and worked to remove unsightly graffiti and illegal billboards. Molina instituted landmark legislation that restricts the proliferation of adult businesses in the unincorporated areas. She also created the County's Nuisance and Bar Abatement Team—commonly known

as the NAT Team—which has resulted in liquor license revocations and the subsequent closures of at least 14 problematic bars, nightclubs, and markets.

Molina also has devoted considerable energy toward revitalizing First District neighborhoods by augmenting public safety. Specifically, Molina conceived the “Valinda Task Force Model,” an effective approach used to combat gang activity. It requires the Sheriff’s Department to supply more manpower to areas with high gang presence. Deputies work closely with Probation Department officers, who are on-hand to determine whether arrested suspects already are on probation status and, hence, take repeat offenders off the streets as quickly as possible. In turn, the District Attorney’s office assigns a specific attorney to manage gang-related cases that are filed as a result of work by a particular task force. That same attorney is then assigned to be the lead lawyer when the case goes to trial. This arrangement ensures greater continuity between the arrest and the prosecution of a suspect—and, as a result, the chances for conviction increase. Molina’s “Valinda Task Force Model” has been used in unincorporated areas throughout the First District, including Valinda, East L.A., and the Florence-Firestone neighborhood.

But Molina also understands that economic development is a key part of revitalizing any neighborhood. In this spirit, she has been a key force behind La Alameda Shopping Center. Located in the unincorporated Walnut Park/Florence-Firestone region, the 18.3-acre project is expected to create over 700 jobs and will feature retail shops, restaurants, office space, and a transit center. La Alameda currently is under construction and should open to the public in September 2007. Molina also has used her position on the Metropolitan Transportation Authority’s Board of Directors to bring the Gold Line Eastside Extension light rail project to fruition. It will traverse through the downtown L.A. and Boyle Heights, then end at the East L.A. Civic Center—and merchants along the route already have begun expressing interest in setting up shop along the light rail line. The Eastside Extension should be open to the public by 2009.

Whether functioning on a local or national level, Molina always maintained her reputation as a fighter and groundbreaker. In the 1970s, Molina served in the Carter White House and the San Francisco Department of Health and Human Services. She was elected to the California State Assembly in 1982 and the Los Angeles City Council in 1987. Her victorious leadership against the construction of a prison in East Los Angeles is legendary. Named as one of the Democratic Party’s “10 Rising Stars” by TIME magazine in 1996, Molina served as one of four vice chairs of the Democratic National Committee (DNC) through 2004. During the 2000 Presidential Election, Molina was one of 15 top women leaders nationwide to be named as a possible vice-presidential candidate by the White House Project, a non-profit and non-partisan group dedicated to raising awareness of women’s leadership in American politics.

In addition, Molina continues to remain active in community issues through her board membership with numerous civil rights organizations, including the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF).

Molina resides in the Mount Washington area of the City of Los Angeles with her husband—businessman Ron Martinez—and their college-age daughter, Valentina. She divides her time between her family, her position as county supervisor, and her love for quilting for which she has received recognition for original pieces she created